

In Arkansas, we have a very successful Best Management Practices program for all forestry activities. In fact, over 85% of Arkansas' private timberland owners voluntarily adhere to these Best Management Practices to reduce water pollution from all forestry activities.

Let me restate that over 85% of Arkansas' private timberland owners voluntarily adhere to these Best Management Practices to reduce water pollution from all forestry activities. This is a wonderful example of where everyone works together to take care of their own environment and have been successful in their efforts!

The EPA's background for the new regulation states that these new requirements of obtaining water permits for forestry activities would take effect only if the state did not develop a satisfactory system of its own, or if a specific water body needed the regulation to remain clean. It also states that only 3 to 9 percent of all non-point source pollution comes from forestry-related activities.

Mr. President, let's talk through each of these forestry-related activities to find out just exactly what each includes as well as what a good Best Management Practices program does to combat potential pollution from each of these.

Site preparation. Generally, site preparation includes removing unwanted vegetation and other material when necessary and before any harvesting of timber can take place. Best Management Practices provide guidelines to minimize the use of equipment and disturbances near streams or other bodies of water, keep equipment out of streamside management zones, and minimize the movement and disturbance of soil.

Reforestation. Reforestation is simply the process of planting trees. Reforestation is the single process that prevents any further erosion of exposed soil. I can't see why we would want to slow down the reforestation process by implementing a permitting process.

Prescribed burning. Prescribed burning is done almost exclusively to prevent potential forest fires. In many of our nation's old growth forests, prescribed burning has prevented what would have been certain destruction of thousands of acres of beautiful forestland. We want to prevent forest fires for the loss of timber as well as for the potential loss of property and life. Best Management Practices provide guidelines for conducting prescribed burning operations and ensuring a minimal potential for erosion and forest fire.

Pest and fire control. If someone is trying to control a forest fire, why do we want to hinder their efforts? For the same reason, we don't want our Nation's forests eaten up by bugs.

Harvesting operations including thinning and, when necessary, clear-cutting. This is the crux of the issue. Timber harvesting is the timber indus-

try. Following Best Management Practices ensures that during any harvesting operation, extreme care is taken to prevent unnecessary water pollution. Best Management Practices encourage thinning of existing forests as opposed to clear-cutting of our Nation's forests. Thinning is going into a forest and removing only a small portion of the timber.

Surface drainage. Surface drainage through a forest is a naturally slow. And, following Arkansas' Best Management Practices, a buffer of trees must be left around all streams and rivers.

Road Maintenance and Construction. It is necessary to have forest roads to reach the available timber. Best Management Practices require the minimization of stream crossings, designing the road to be no wider than necessary, and building roads to minimize the adverse impacts of heavy rain.

Nursery Operations. To conduct any reforestation activities, you must have seedlings to plant. Best Management Practices for nurseries include minimizing soil disturbance, runoff, and chemical application.

Mr. President, the voluntary use of these and many, many other Best Management Practices in Arkansas have successfully reduced and prevented water pollution from all forestry activities. Our nation's private timberland owners should not be burdened with more unnecessary regulations when they are already voluntarily complying with Best Management Practices to effectively reduce water pollution.

Reasonable minds should prevail and agree on a common sense solution to promoting Best Management Practices in the forestry industry without unnecessary regulation and allow states like Arkansas to continue voluntarily implementing our successful best management practices.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, February 9, 2000, the Federal debt stood at \$5,690,617,208,881.34 (Five trillion, six hundred ninety billion, six hundred seventeen million, two hundred eight thousand, eight hundred eighty-one dollars and thirty-four cents).

One year ago, February 9, 1999, the Federal debt stood at \$5,585,068,000,000 (Five trillion, five hundred eighty-five billion, sixty-eight million).

Five years ago, February 9, 1995, the Federal debt stood at \$4,803,443,000,000 (Four trillion, eight hundred three billion, four hundred forty-three million).

Ten years ago, February 9, 1990, the Federal debt stood at \$2,980,491,000,000 (Two trillion, nine hundred eighty billion, four hundred ninety-one million) which reflects a doubling of the debt—an increase of almost \$3 trillion—\$2,710,126,208,881.34 (Two trillion, seven hundred ten billion, one hundred twenty-six million, two hundred eight thou-

sand, eight hundred eighty-one dollars and thirty-four cents) during the past 10 years.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations and a treaty which were referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

2000 ECONOMIC REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT—PM 87

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Joint Economic Committee.

To the Congress of the United States:

Today, the American economy is stronger than ever. We are on the brink of marking the longest economic expansion in our Nation's history. More than 20 million new jobs have been created since Vice President Gore and I took office in January 1993. We now have the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years—even as core inflation has reached its lowest level since 1965.

This expansion has been both deep and broad, reaching Americans of all races, ethnicities, and income levels. African American unemployment and poverty are at their lowest levels on record. Hispanic unemployment is likewise the lowest on record, and poverty among Hispanics is at its lowest level since 1979. A long-running trend of rising income inequality has been halted in the last 7 years. From 1993 to 1998, families at the bottom of the income distribution have enjoyed the same strong income growth as workers at the top.

In 1999 we had the largest dollar surplus in the Federal budget on record and the largest in proportion to our economy since 1951. We are on course to achieve more budget surpluses for many years to come. We have used this unique opportunity to make the right choices for the future over the past 2 years, America has paid down \$140 billion in debt held by the public. With my plan to continue to pay down the debt, we are now on track to eliminate the Nation's publicly held debt by 2013. Our fiscal discipline has paid off in lower interest rates, higher private investment, and stronger productivity growth.

These economic successes have not been achieved by accident. They rest on the three pillars of the economic